

Message Text

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70

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

FMC-04 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CG-00 COA-02 DLOS-07

SWF-02 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 DRC-01 /079 W

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R 221815Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1013

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PASS USDOC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, DR, US

SUBJECT: PUERTO RICAN MARITIME AUTHORITY

1. SOME LOCAL SHIPPING AGENTS HAVE INFORMED THE EMBASSY THAT PUERTO RICO IS ESTABLISHING A MARTIME AUTHORITY CALLED AUTORIDAD MARITIMA DE PUERTO RICO. REPORTEDLY THE AUTHORITY WILL BE FORMED AS A PUBLIC CORPORATION. THE PUERTO RICAN LEGISLATURE MAY HAVE PASSED ENABLING AND FINANCING LEGISLATION, AND THERE ARE REPORTS THAT PUERTO RICO HAS RECEIVED APPROVAL FROM THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND MARTITIME COMMISSION.

2. ALLEDGEDLY THE AUTHORITY IS BUYING THE PUERTO RICAN SHIPPING INTERESTS OF SEALAND, SEATRAN, AND TRANSAMERICAN TRAILER TRANSPORTATION (TTT) FOR AN AMOUNT BETWEEN \$200 AND \$300 MILLION. PUERTO RICO MAY HAVE ALREADY MADE A DOWN PAYMENT AND ISSUED SOME 8 1/2 PERCENT BONDS THROUGH THE FIRST BOSTON CORP. TO RAISE ADDITIONAL FUNDS.

3. THE LOCAL SEALAND REPRESENTATIVE, ALEJANDRO ALFARO, HAS TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT SEALAND HAS BEEN AWARDED THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MANAGEMENT CONTRACT FOR THE PUERTO RICAN MARITIME AUTHORITY.

4. DOMINICAN REACTION HAS NOT BEEN PUBLIC BUT CONCERN IS EVIDENT IN THEIR RAPID FORMATION OF A COMMISSION TO LOOK INTO THE SITUATION. SOME DOMINICAN OFFICIALS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF PUERTO RICO HAVING SOME CONTROL OVER FREIGHT RATES HERE. APPROXIMATELY 45 PERCENT OF DOMINICAN IMPORTS AND EXPORTS MOVE THROUGH SAN JUAN IN THE CONTAINER TRADE. ANY POTENTIAL PROBLEM, OF COURSE, DEPENDS ON HOW PUERTO RICO USES THE NEW MARITIME AUTHORITY. THE EMBASSY HAS NOT HEARD OF ANY DIRECT CONTACTS YET BETWEEN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND PUERTO RICO ON THIS ISSUE, NOR HAVE WE BEEN APPROACHED OFFICIALLY BY THE DOMINICANS.

5. A VICE PRESIDENT OF CAROLINA FREIGHT CARRIERS RECENTLY VISITED THE EMBASSY AND COMMENTED THAT THE PUERTO RICAN MARITIME AUTHORITY MAY HAVE PROBLEMS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL LONGSHOREMAN'S UNION IF THE AUTHORITY ATTEMPTS TO MANIPULATE RATES AND CARGO HANDLING TO SUIT JUST PUERTO RICO'S INTERESTS WHICH HE BELIEVES THEY WILL TRY TO DO.

6. THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION THE DEPARTMENT HAS ON THE PUERTO RICAN MARITIME AUTHORITY.
HURWITCH

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